

## **Community Engagement Task Force Meeting**

March 6, 2017

Task force members present: Brad Johnson, -Damon Circosta, George Chapman,- Carole Meyre, Valerie Jordan, Tom Oxholm, -Amy Fulk, Courtney Crowder, Joyce Fitzpatrick

Guests: 15

City staff: 2

6:05PM: Damon started the meeting and introduced the notecard system for accepting citizen's questions. After all handouts were passed out, he started with the agenda.

### **Review the Citizen Engagement Plan for Rezoning**

- Damon stated that they had rezoning case presentations last meeting and their plan was now available
- Brad noted that the regular availability of a facility is hard on parks staff, but it is not hard regionally to reserve a room. Parks did not like the idea of reservations for one hour/week.
- Damon explained the task force subcommittee tried to build out a process to expand notification on the front end of application. The plan has a pre-application neighborhood meeting with multiple stakeholders & plenty of time for comment/dialogue. Additionally, the planning committee would meet at a time that is more convenient for citizens (evening hours). They are trying to eliminate rezoning by surprise and keep everyone in the communication loop.
- Notification of the pre-application neighborhood meeting would be for everyone within 500 feet (not 100) or the proposed rezoning case location. They would possibly look at the type of rezone/size to dictate the radius they use for notifications. Notifications go out to more than just property owners, but also residents, registered neighborhood groups, CACs, etc.
  - Once someone's contact info is on the list of meeting attendees, they stay on the list and get all updates on the case.
  - Reports of the meetings would be required by code on a provided template which includes a prioritized list of citizen's concerns. Citizens would get a copy of the report so they can verify if it is how the conversation went.
  - The pre-application meeting should be in a public location, ideally a Parks and Rec facility. It should also be in the early evening.
- When application is submitted, the task force wants to demystify the application, making it easier to understand for citizens.
- After the application is submitted, planning does an initial review
- After planning's review, there is a community meeting.
  - All the notification done for the pre-application neighborhood meeting will be done again, as well as inviting all attendees from the prior meeting. All city communications plus more would be used for notification. Good signage at the the site would be a good option.
  - Planning facilitates the community meeting and it is in a public place.

- There is an RSVP process in place so that staff knows if a large location is needed for the meeting.
- Carole disagrees with the meetings are removed from the CACs and are now hosted by the city.
- A meeting report is generated by planning staff with more than just numbers, but also citizen's concerns, narrative information, citizen's priorities, etc. The meeting will also be recorded and posted online.
- In response, applicant needs time to amend case before going to planning commission.
- Carole added that with large meetings, a facilitator (not the developer) might be needed. Damon believes the RSVP would help.
- There will be sufficient time for public comment for those who cannot attend the meeting (ends 2 days before council vote) on the initial application or secondary application.
  - The plan will ensure neighborhood groups have time to meet and vote so public comment report can contain their group's votes. A resolution format is used, not straight vote format.
  - Courtney asked about templates and support for neighborhood groups who are voting. The task force decided they will provide templates for public comment but it is the neighborhood group's decision if they want to use them.
- The amended application would be published and shared with all citizens involved in every stage of the process at least 10 days before planning commission.
- Planning staff would generate a report including the public comments from community meetings and the public comment period.
- Planning commission will be at an accessible meeting time and dialogue should be more open. If Planning Commission rejects the application, the applicant can revise it and go back to citizens, table the application, or take their chances and go to City Council.
- Carole pointed out that there is not a second large public meeting where everyone comes back and discusses the case. She believes it should go between the public comment period and the amended application being published. The first meeting is purely educational, and the second meeting is the applicant hearing concerns.
  - Courtney responds after the community meeting, neighborhood groups (HOAs, CACs, etc.) could invite the applicant in for their meetings.
  - Carole is concerned this would be diluting communication and lots of groups would reach out to the applicant.
  - Damon and Courtney like the idea of multiple groups reaching out instead of the one big community meeting because "that's community engagement".
  - Carole responds that everyone doesn't get to benefit from hearing other's concerns, some citizens are left out of the loop, and some citizens will need to learn the presented information via documents/reports.
  - Brad sates this lets community organizations complain without having to make decisions. Advocacy organizations can advocate, and don't have to compromise. A

second meeting would have people negotiating under unmoored priorities. Planning Commission will decide if adequate compromises are made.

- Carole replies that we remove citizen dialogue if all citizens aren't brought back together.
- Damon is concerned Carole's second meeting wouldn't get the same body from the first meeting (despite Carole's beliefs). By having many small neighborhood meetings, citizen engagement will increase.
- Carole says what is missing is bringing citizen voice back together (dialogue, not documents). Damon says this is why it is so important that the planning commission meeting is in the evening.
- Tom says historically CACs lose confidence in the Planning Commission, and the CAC feels it is their job to negotiate with developers to get what is best.
- Carole responds that it is not a lack of trust; CACs are a shell/body that you come to participate in. They can be improved but by ripping it out citizens must find a role in here. The CACs are organizing vessels to communicate through, not the subgroups (HOA, neighborhood orgs, etc.)
- Damon says this plan was the task force's best attempt at engaging the most people and diversifying how they are engaged. It also pressures the applicant to get more broad opinions. The task force does not want to vote on this, but aims for consensus.
- Carole asks why the proposal doesn't build on what exists and why it is starting over. She asks for more opinions.
  - Joyce likes that the plan pressures the applicant and opens up dialogue to more citizen groups.
  - George adds that people can participate in a way they are comfortable with.
  - Amy suggests cross advertising the meetings and adding more than 10 days before Planning Commission so there is more time for dialogue.
    - Damon adds that it should be 60 or more days, not 45.
    - Brad says the system is tough because their 45 day number is based on no citizen engagement. A lot of frustration comes from the planners going to CACs before they are done.
    - Carole responds that that is what the new plan does. The first meeting is pie in the sky and then the community meeting is the real ideation, but we don't bring the whole group back together for dialogue.
    - Brad thought after the initial review planners have more time before the community meeting.
  - Damon goes through the plan again and notes what is absent is bringing everyone back to same table.
    - George asks if the table is really the same. We're talking in circles and not going into what the tables are.
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- Carole wants step 5 of the process fleshed out.
- Brad says it is important to teach people about the process, not just zoning case. He also wants the planner to talk about what the plan is consistent with and is not consistent with at community meetings. He sees the applicant speaking, the planner talking, and then citizen's ask questions.
- Damon lays aside the process for now, but the group will work assuming a similar process will be used in their plans.

**\*5 minute break\***

**Review and create a DRAFT Citizen Engagement Structure**

- Joyce organized the structure with the subcommittee last week. George did the bulk of the planning with the subcommittee serving as the Devil's Advocate. They will not eliminate CACs but rebrand them to boost performance.
- George talks about broad citizen engagement and how different entities participate in the process.
- The RCAC is the highest level of the structure.
  - The whole purpose of the structure is to engender trust, and be inclusive, and it will have predictable and documented processes that are repeated and regularly improved.
- The second level is the Community Engagement Board which is appointed by city council. They will establish standards for groups/organizations that want city recognition and support for their efforts in citizen engagement.
  - Incentives for groups/organizations include funding, recognition, etc. They will also create a recognition program for strong organizations doing community engagement.
  - The board needs 8 members and one should be the chair, designated by the mayor. One member per council district at minimum.
  - They meet at least quarterly with adequate staffing; they would be professionals in public communication and engagement.
- Citizen Engagement Councils (rebrand of CACs) is the third level, fostering neighborhood-based engagement.
  - They will have 8-12 CECs, each with 10-15% of population, and with compact/recognizable boundaries.
  - They will be established by 2020.
  - Restructuring should be done with citizen participation under guidance from the board. CEC's will be approved by Council once they meet the board's guidelines/standards.
    - Every 3 years after a CEC recognized, they get reevaluated or recertified by the board to ensure they are maintaining representativeness.
  - The board will offer them leadership trainings (not noted in the handout).

- City involvement network is base layer. This is all groups and organizations that work to engage the citizens and are connected to CECs and the board.
- Courtney clarifies that this plan is more of a conversation starter and the dates are flexible to allow for genuine development.
- Brad likes the levels and adds that Level 5 would be communication with the public at large (people who don't go to meetings or aren't involved in subgroups).
- Courtney wants public comment infused throughout. His mother should be able to pick up the phone and leave a voicemail on her opinion.
  - Brad thinks this is level 5 which is maintained by CEB.
  - Courtney says somewhere in the city is problem solvers, he wants them to be amped up. He talks about work as a Case Manager where the job is to take complaints and respond to general inquiry.
    - Brad points out "one call" Durham and Courtney jokes it should be Ruffin's job to handle calls and general inquiries.
- Damon asks if this plan requires increases in city staff.
  - George is not prepared to comment on levels of City staff. Once council moves on one direction, it needs to be properly staffed.
  - Courtney comments that CACs are not properly supported via staff, resources, etc., so that would get reevaluated in this new process.
- Brad wonders what Neighborhood Services would think about this plan.
  - Carole doesn't want to ask NS. She adds that most CACs are concerned about lack of support they get.
  - Brad thinks maybe it is because citizens have not asked enough of Neighborhood Services. If it is citizen-driven, we should look at how leadership of these evolves to independence. If staff is the only a frustration, they should look at removing staff.
  - George comments on having been in a staff position. He thinks the board is very critical. The staff supports and gives Council recommendations but the boards give an independent view of what is needed/how things are going.
    - Carole asks how this is a two way conversation and where citizen feedback to staff and council comes in.
    - George says they will need to develop a full communications plan with adequate resources.
    - Brad adds the citizens should be able to petition board for the resources they need.
    - Carole is looking more at a neighborhood level- they would be very big districts.
      - Courtney clarifies it could be more or less CECs, this is just a conversation starter.
      - Damon tables the conversation on how many we have.
- Tom asks why the board has 8 members and if it aligns with elected officials. He also wants to know how we make City Council accountable and if CACs will become CECs.
  - George said it was just a good size. He goes on that the board will establish what is important to citizen groups and some CACs may meet the criteria. Some CACs may

become CECs and some may operate independently (not ideal). It depends on how well the board establishes guidelines and sets parameters.

- Tom asks about the specific points (dates, numbers, etc.)?
  - George comments that they are really for discussion.
- Damon mentions alignment with community centers and/or police districts.
- Courtney points out the board won't be effective for a few years. It will be established soon and the rest would be fleshed out after so the board can set up a communication platform.
- Brad is concerned we change to the new system but citizens don't know.
  - Carole wants to see a point of communication and the city driving all communications in and out. The city can also cross promote and eliminate the silo problems they face.
  - Courtney emphasizes public comment periods and more conversation.
- Damon asks how the group would like to proceed with the work and Tom suggests working through it, although Carole admits she is not there yet. She is concerned about the gray area between level 3 and 4 and neighborhood level concerns.
  - George tasks level 3 (CECs) with identifying and working with level 4 (neighborhood orgs)
- Damon asks if CECs are set up to have representatives from each level 4 group.
  - Joyce asks what those small groups are and if we know how many exist. There should be an invitation to talk about reimagining themselves as CECs. CECs should be reaching out to the neighborhoods.
  - George adds that Level 4 is self-created, not created by the city.
- Damon talks about the Level 5 being individuals receiving broad communications.
- Carole talks about all the pushing out of information and meetings, but how we need to get responses and citizen feedback as well. The group agrees it is unclear what the public can comment on now and looks towards a standardized process for public comment.
  - Carole adds that people now petition the council, but get no response. She emphasizes the need for dialogue and response.
- The group works to edit the document from the top down, agreeing to finish level 1 and 2 tonight and tackling the next ones next meeting.
  - Level 1- Raleigh City Council
    - Tom wants to add accountability- everything must trace back to them.
    - Carole wants to elevate building trust.
    - Joyce likes earmarking city wide issues we won't delegate out to CECs.
    - Courtney says the boards work is to figure out what the work is/ what is discussed at CECs.
    - Brad wants council to decide what processes are subject to community engagement.
      - Carole argues it is the board.
      - Courtney says the board recommends, but the council decides.
  - Level 2- Community Engagement Board
    - Brad talks about a combination of council representatives and citizens.

- Damon says there should be a citizen voice appointed by CECs.
  - Courtney suggests that the CEC elects a chair and the chair elects the council rep. Damon agrees.
  - Amy suggests that maybe they have a specific slot for expertise- like X number serve in leadership in CECs or something like that.
- Brad asks about neighborhood groups getting representation since they're separate from CECs.
- Courtney proposes CECs get three slots, not just 1 of the 9 seats.
  - Damon thinks the board should decide.
  - George says the CEB can recommend up to three names from the CECs as part of their appointment
- Brad is sensitive to the voices that are unheard if the dominant political class is the one suggesting leadership.
- Joyce says like planning boards, this has people coming in with different expertise.
- Damon sums up the board with 8 appointed by council, and 1+ member of CEC who is elected by CECs. In the interim, that person will be appointed by CEB itself.
  - Courtney wants the council to make the decision; the CEC and the CEB suggest to council but council is the ultimate appointing authority to CEB.
  - Brad doesn't think you should do it until CECs in place. Damon says in interim they should add bullet point "in looking to nominations, want people in public communications and engagement, and look at CL, RNC, and Neighborhood Exchange participants".
- Brad comments on term limits and temporary board members. The group decides no one should be appointed until CECs in place, but Amy wants to make sure a citizen voice is present from the beginning.
  - Brad proposes questions about this citizen's seat and their structure/term limits.
- Carole believes a leader will emerge from the beginning of CECs and Brad thinks they may need to pull from the RCAC.
- Joyce wants a stronger word like "design, implement, and maintain" and Carole wants metrics to be included in functions.
- Courtney wants a conversation with neighborhood services and communications about this.
  - Carole says they will not get dialogue going that way.
- Brad wants public engagement topics spelled out so if a department adopts a policy, they need to go to the CEB. All participation policies should be reviewed every few years by CEB. He comments that citizens should be able to petition and Carole agrees.

- Courtney wants large enough board to have subcommittees and an odd number for voting purposes.
- Brad adds an ombudsman to this level, but Damon wants it in level 5.
- Carole wants the CEB to meet afterhours with the option of public comment.
- Damon says Joyce will clean up 1 and 2 and everyone will think through level 3 and 4. Damon asked if Carole and Brad to work on level 5 but Carole declines.
- Amy will compile a list of “legos” and work on level 5 drafting.
- During the last meeting, they will present the ideas to council. After the next meeting, they would like to show their ideas to city departments for feedback.
  - Carole doesn’t think it is appropriate to show staff before it goes to council.
- Damon recaps the group will all work on level 3 and level 4 individually, and Amy will help with 5. The group will clean it up and pass along the document to staff for their reactions.

Meeting adjourned at 8:45PM